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JAMES A. ROSS

# JAMES A. ROSE

1850-1912

*In Memoriam*



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## JAMES A. ROSE.

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When on the afternoon of May 29th, 1912, it was flashed over the telephone and telegraph wires that the Secretary of State had been stricken by the hand of death, employés and friends were loath to believe the intelligence. Just the day before he had been all day at the State Capitol, and had made his daily rounds, and performed his usual duties; he had given a kindly word to those he saw, asked after the sick and absent, and sent messages of encouragement and cheer to those who were suffering or in sorrow; no one was forgotten. He staid at his office later than usual, as there had been a meeting of the State Board to canvass the returns of the primary elections of April 9th, of which board he was, by virtue of his office, a member. He made a call at the residence of his son who was sick and later sat on the porch at his residence. He retired early, but was taken sick at about 11 o'clock at night with hemorrhage of the stomach. A physician was called and every effort was made to relieve the sick man, and for a time it seemed that he would be able to overcome the weakness caused by the intense suffering and the loss of blood, but other attacks followed and later the next day, an attack came on to which he succumbed at 3:30 o'clock in the afternoon.

Funeral services were held at the residence on Thursday afternoon, May 30th, at which time Dr. J. H. Stevenson of Seneca, Illinois, made an address on the life and work of Mr. Rose. Dr. Stevenson was an intimate personal friend of Mr. Rose, and was formerly the pastor of the Church of which he was a member. Hundreds called to do honor to him, many saying with tear-dimmed eyes, "He was the best friend I had in the world." The same evening at 8:00 o'clock a special train over the Illinois Central railroad took the remains of the dead Secretary, accom-

panied by his family and employés, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State Auditor, State Treasurer, Attorney General, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, committees of the Illinois Legislature and many other officials, to Golconda, Illinois, the former home of Mr. Rose, where services were held in the Presbyterian church, of which he and his family were members, and in which he had felt so much interest. The whole of the little town turned out to do honor to the memory of its foremost citizen, and finally all that is mortal of James A. Rose was laid in the little cemetery where were already lying a son who had died as a little child, and a beautiful young daughter who died eight years ago, and left a young husband and two little daughters. These children have been the consolation and joy of Mr. and Mrs. Rose, who gave them an especial tenderness and care. The death of this daughter was a severe blow to Mr. Rose, and life was not the same to him after that time.

James A. Rose was a native Illinoian. He was born at Golconda, Illinois, October 13, 1850. He was educated in the common schools and attended the Illinois State Normal school at Normal. He began teaching school before he reached his majority. He was elected county superintendent of schools of Pope county in 1873, and in 1881, he was elected States' attorney of the county. During the administration of Gov. J. W. Fifer, he was a trustee of the State Reformatory at Pontiac, and later commissioner of the Southern Illinois Penitentiary at Chester. In 1896, he was elected Secretary of State on the Republican ticket; he was re-elected in 1900, 1904, and 1908. He had received an immense plurality vote for the nomination for the same office at the primary election April 9, 1912, and had thus received the nomination for a fifth term as secretary of the State of Illinois.

On April 14, 1874, he married Miss Elizabeth Young, of Golconda, who survives him. He leaves also one son, Charles R. Rose, of Springfield, and one daughter, Helen E., the wife of James P. Smith, of Padueah, Ky.

He was a member of the Historical Society almost from its organization, and he was its wise and far-seeing friend and counselor, ready to assist in any of its enterprises. He was a member of the Masonic order, and he was also an Odd Fellow.

JAMES A. ROSE.

The State of Illinois has lost an efficient and faithful public servant, but the people of Illinois have lost a friend. James A. Rose was a self-made man. He rose by his own efforts, and with these same efforts, he made the political fortunes of his friends. Every honor that he gained for himself, he shared with his friends, shared them generously, freely and with a simplicity that robbed favors of any tinge of patronizing. Had he been selfish or self-seeking, he might have easily achieved higher offices, and gained great wealth for himself. Mr. Rose was of humble origin as have been most of the great men who have made this state, but he came of a family who gave soldiers to the cause of the Union and who shed blood upon its country's battlefields. James A. Rose was but a child at the breaking out of the war between the States, and it was a cause of grief to him that he was not old enough to have offered his life for his country. He loved to talk about the struggles of the Civil War, and to recount the deeds of the brave men of 1861-1865, particularly of the part taken by Illinoisans in the great struggle.

At the annual meeting of the Illinois State Historical Society of 1907, Judge Jacob W. Wilkin, who was a young officer with General Grant at Vicksburg, gave a charming address on his own remembrances of General Grant. This address Mr. Rose knew nearly word for word, and he often repeated portions of it.

Mr. Rose was a man of distinctly American type. The son of poor parents, he, by his own efforts, gained an education and made his way by hard work, earnest effort and self denial. These early struggles caused him to place a high estimate on education, and he never failed to

assist in the cause of education, either for the individual, or for the people of the State. As popular as he was with the masses, it was necessary to know this man intimately to appreciate the real greatness and depth of his mind and character. He was not a man of learning in an academic sense, and yet he excelled most men in his knowledge of the history of the country and the State, and in the fund of useful practical knowledge which he possessed. He loved good literature, and was especially fond of poetry. He was a born lawyer, and would have made a good judge, as his was a logical and judicial mind, always able to see both sides of a question, even though he was a strong partisan. His friends were by no means confined to the political party in the councils of which he was for so many years a conspicuous leader. He was a remarkable judge of character, and could read the mind of a man like the pages of an open book. He could tell the false from the true, a real friend from a pretended one. He was a party man and a politician, and he took pride in this. He expected loyalty from his friends, but not in a greater degree than he gave it. He was a keen observer, a close student of human nature. His management of the immense affairs of the office which he filled was remarkable. In the fifteen years in which he filled the office, its importance had doubled and trebled, but he kept pace with it, and made it a model business office. He had his faults. He would be the last person to desire fulsome flattery or meaningless eulogy, but his faults were the faults of a brave and manly man. He was courageous, and true, and kind. To his family and those dependent upon him, he gave tenderness and love, all things in large measure, desiring only their happiness and well being. No man more than he knew the meaning and felt the responsibilities of friendship. To be called by him, his friend, meant something to him, and he gave the best of himself to that relation.

Death was not an enemy to him. He was not called upon to bear a long sickness. This he feared and dreaded. But he has been suddenly called away from his manifold

activities, his heavy responsibilities and the cares of State. He will no more answer the call of duty. The hand of death has stilled the loyal, generous heart, and has dulled his ear forever to all praise or blame.

The following lines are from a poem which was a favorite with Mr. Rose and which he often quoted, speaking feelingly of its beauty and pathos:

Sunset and evening star,  
And one clear call for me,  
And may there be no moaning of the bar  
When I put out to sea.

Twilight and evening bell,  
And after that the dark,  
And may there be no sadness of farewell  
When I embark.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,  
Too full for sound and foam  
When that which drew from out the boundless deep,  
Turns again home.

A prominent newspaper of the State has said of him:

JAMES A. ROSE.

Illinois will feel lonely without James A. Rose. It seemed as if this kindly figure, dignified with that simple stateliness that is a part of "court life" at Springfield, was too intimately associated with the old state ever to be parted from her.

At Washington they have their rules of precedence and etiquette. In "official" society, diplomats, Cabinet ministers, senators, their wives and daughters are figures of fixed social value. The same customs prevail at Springfield, but with an element of intimate friendliness that keeps them democratic. In this circle, as Secretary of State, Rose lived for years, and it is difficult for an "up-stater" to realize how big a place he held in it. The government of Illinois means more under the shadow of the capi-

tol dome and the Lincoln monument than it does in the lee of a Chicago skyscraper. And to thousands and thousands of Illinoisans, Secretary Rose shared with the governor the honor of symbolizing the government.

In his administration of his department since his entrance into control of it in 1897, Mr. Rose had a record of the old style of bureaucratic efficiency. Free from scandal, liberal in extending departmental assistance to legislators, keeping the routine work up to date, loyal to the Republican party, James A. Rose made an official of a kind that we think of too lightly in these days of panting progress. Illinois will be put to it to find a better servant or a better friend.









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